



consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs
Virginia H. Knauer, Director

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Timetable for speaking up about trains

Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) wants to hear from consumers about Federal plans to change passenger & freight train service in 20 states & District of Columbia. A **Transportation Dept.** report last month recommended a 25% cut in train routes & service in the northeast & midwest as well as a program to provide 70% of the funding for commuter train service operated by state or local governments.

Copies of the report are available for reading at ICC's **Rail Services Planning Office**, 1900 L St. NW, Washington, DC; at ICC field offices in northeast & midwest cities; at 1143 libraries receiving Federal documents; in *Federal Register*: Feb. 12; & at state offices of Senators & Congressmen representing Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia & Wisconsin.

ICC will have hearings in 8 cities on March 11 at 9:30 a.m. & 7 p.m. In an unusual move by a Federal agency, ICC will have attorneys in 16 of its 78 field offices to assist consumers in preparing testimony for the hearings. Attorneys will be available the week of March 5 to explain procedure for testimony & to help each consumer to word testimony to stay within the 10-minute limit for each speaker. For more information about hearings & assistance, contact one of the following ICC coordinators:

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Hearings are just one way to tell ICC what you think are the problems & needs of rail service in the northeast & midwest. No matter where you live, you can comment on northeast & midwest rail service by writing to Rail Services Planning Office, 1900 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20036. State at the top of your letter that it is "For the Record of Rail Services Hearings, March 11."

Vehicle safety investigations

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is investigating about 60 cases of safety related problems in cars, motorcycle helmets, tires, child car seats & motorhomes. An investigation does not mean that there is a defect in each case listed, but that a safety related problem has been reported. In each case, NHTSA wants to find the cause of the problem & how the problem can be remedied.

CONSUMER NEWS is listing almost all of the cases in NHTSA's report dated Feb. 6 [CONSUMER NEWS is omitting cases involving trucks]. The complete list is called Motor Vehicle Defects Investigations. For a free copy, send your request to Consumer Information, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Consumers who have experienced any of the problems with the vehicles in NHTSA's list of investigations (or consumers who own the motorcycle helmets or child car seats listed) may provide NHTSA with useful information by writing to Office of Consumer Affairs, Transportation Dept. (NHTSA), Washington, DC 20590. Include make, model, year, serial number & facts relating to the problem.

CASE	MAKE & MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEM
098	Ford: Fairlane & Mustang	1966-70	Drop-in fuel tank	Certain vents exposed to rupture by shifting luggage
132	General Motors (GM): 1965-66 all models	1965-66	Quadrajert carburetor	Fuel leakage at plug, resulting in fire potential
140	Ford: Mustang & Mercury Cougar	1968-69	Seat back pivot arm	Inboard pivot failure
161	GM, Chrysler, American Motors (AMC) & Ford: all models	1965-71	Power brake vacuum check valve	No power assist with failure of valve
190	All manufacturers of travel trailers	1965-70	Axles, wheels & tires	Overloading of suspensions
209	*GM: Chevrolet Biscayne	1969	Rear suspension tie rod	Failure may cause loss of vehicle control
252	GM: Chevrolet cars & ½-ton vans	1969	Steering tie rod end	Suspected fatigue failure in thread section
258.5	GM: Cadillac, 1965-69 Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Buick	1965-69	Engine mounts	Secondary effects from shearing of engine mounts
266	Ford: full size 1969 models	1969	Ignition switch	Poor connection between harness plug & switch
278	Volkswagen (VW): all models	1965-71	Seat & seat track	Seat track separation during accidents
282	Ford: standard size	various	15x5 wheel	Bead seat failure
287	Ford: Galaxie	1968-70	Front wheel spindle	Fatigue crack in heel area
291	Ford: Mercury Capri	1971	Evaporative emission system	Underhood fires due to system malfunction
297	Firestone: GMC PD-4903 & PD-4905	1969-70	Front tires	Excessive heat build-up fails tires
C2-05	AMC Jeepster	1971	Service brakes	Rear brake lock-up
C2-09	All manufacturers	all	Motorcycle helmets	Units providing inadequate protection
C2-25	Ford, Chrysler, GM & International Harvester (IH): school bus	pre-1966	Hydraulic brake line	Steel hydraulic brake line failure due to corrosion
C2-51	Avco Motor Homes: Grand Lodge	1971	Gas tank	Fume intrusion into electrical circuitry box
C2-53	Ford: all models	1967-71	Brake master cylinder	Failure of cylinder due to corrosion
C2-54	Norton Villiers: Commando 750	various	Yoke	Cracking
C2-60	VW: all models	pre-1963	Heater	Engine fume intrusion into passenger compartment
C2-61	Ford: sedan	various	15x6.5 wheel	Disc failure
C3-02	Honda: CB 750, CB 500 & CB 450 (K3 & K4)	all	Gas tank filler cap	Becomes dislodged, allowing gas to be ignited
C3-03	Chrysler: all "C" body models	1969-72	Bulkhead electrical connector	Becomes disconnected
C3-08	*AMC: all models	1971-73	Torque control	Insufficient control on critical fasteners
C3-09	B.F. Goodrich: tires	1967-71	Space Saver tire	Insufficient instructions for mounting tire to rim
C3-10	Ford: Lincoln Continental Mark IV	1972	Tie rod sleeve	Breakage

CASE	MAKE & MODEL	YEAR	COMPONENT	POSSIBLE PROBLEM
C3-11	GM: Cadillac	1959-60	Steering Pitman arm	Fatigue failure causing loss of vehicle control
C3-15	*Chrysler: Plymouth Valiant	1973	Upper control arm	Low or insufficient torque control
C3-17	British Leyland: Triumph TR-6	1971-72	Fuel tank & filler neck connector	Leaks when filling tank
C3-18	GM: Chevrolet Impala	1969-70	Steering wheel	Breakage at hub
C3-19	Toyota: Land Cruiser	1972	Heater hose & gas tank	Routing of hoses through vehicle interior & location of tank
C3-22	VW: Type I	1967-73	Seat belt & shoulder harness	Degradation caused by battery acid contamination
C3-27	GM: Chevrolet Vega	1967-73	Steering relay rod	Lock-up due to foreign objects
C3-29	Ford: Mercury Capri	1971-73	Windshield wiper arm, shaft & motor	Arm detaches from drive shaft & motor fails due to underpower
C3-30	Harley Davidson: Model 74	various	Gas tank	Leakage
C3-33	Ford: Mercury Capri	1971-72	Seat belt & seat latch	Inboard seat belt abrasion by seat latch
C3-35	IH: Travelall 1110 4x4	1971-73	Steering arm ball	Movement during braking may cause loss of steering control
C3-38	Toyota: Corona	1973	Front disc brake rotors	Corrosion & glazing encountered during shipping
C3-39	Ford: Mercury Capri	1973	Fuel & evaporative line connectors	Molded tubing connectors may crack
C3-40	Skyline Corp.: 19½' Nomad Travel Trailer	1971	Shackle bolt	Inadequate thread engagement with lock nut
C3-41	Chrysler: all 6-cylinder models	1971-72	Exhaust manifold	Cracking
C3-43	GM: Cadillac Eldorado & Oldsmobile Toronado	1967-70	Front wheel lugs	Incorrect torque
C4-01	Ford: B-700 school bus chassis	1969-70	Right front spring	Failure of main & second leaf
C4-05	Kantwet Co.: 55, 56 & 58	various	Child seating system	Sharp edges may injure child
C4-07	Ford: full size	1970-71	Hood latch	Failure of latch mechanism
C4-09	Chrysler: Plymouth Valiant & Dodge Dart "A" body	1970-72	Brake proportioning valve	Rear wheel lock-up under normal brake operation
C4-10	Winnebago: D24 Motorhome	1970-71	Front tires, wheels, springs & axles	Suspension ratings are possibly exceeded by unloaded weights of vehicle front ends with standard or optional equipment, plus normal occupant & luggage loads
C4-11	Action Industries: 25' Swinger Motorhome	1971	See C4-10 for description	See C4-10 for description
C4-12	Champion Home Builders (CHB): 24' Motorhome	1971	See C4-10 for description	See C4-10 for description
C4-13	Bendix Homes Systems: Lifetime Premier 23' Motorhome	1969-71	See C4-10 for description	See C4-10 for description
C4-14	PRF Industries: Travco 220 Motorhome	1970	See C4-10 for description	See C4-10 for description
C4-15	GM: Cadillac	1969-70	Air conditioner blower relay	Failure may cause overheating of electrical harness
C4-16	Daytona Sports: Daytona 500	1966-67	Motorcycle helmet	Unit providing inadequate protection
C4-18	Ford: Torino	1969	Engine mounts	Secondary effects from shearing of engine mounts
C4-19	RV Industries: Landau 25' Motorhome	1970	See C4-10 for description	See C4-10 for description
C4-20	Toyota: Corona, Corolla & Celica	1971	Hood latch	Failure of secondary latch
C4-22	Ford: Pinto	1972-73	Assembly aid tab rear wheel weld	Tab may contact tire, cutting tire
C4-23	GM: Buick Opel	1964-71	Fuel tank & system	Fuel system integrity
C4-26	GM: Cadillac	1969-71	Power steering gear	Binding spool valve
C4-27	CHB: Concord 28' Motorhome	1973	Gas tank location	Location & installation of gas tank may cause overloading
C4-28	Ford: Pinto	1971-74	Rack & pinion steering	Bending of steering assembly on wheel impact causes binding
C4-29	Ford: all with 4-barrel carburetor	1968-74	Non-metallic fast idle cam	Breakage causes jamming of throttle in open position
C4-30	Ford: school bus	1966-74	Brake drum	Breakage causes loss of brakes

*Investigation suspended unless new evidence is turned up by April 7, indicating case should be investigated again.

Warnings!

BATTERY CHARGER—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns consumers to immediately discontinue use of a 12-volt "Kelsey-Stuart Inc." battery charger with the model number A-610 if they bought the charger this year. Chargers may have a defect that could cause a fatal electric shock. Some of the models may have an internal short that results in the positive (red) battery lead carrying 110 volts. Dimatic Co. of Chicago made the charger & began recall in January. Anyone getting one of the chargers this year should not use it, but should contact Dimatic (1659 Elston Ave., Chicago, IL 60622) to arrange for repair or replacement free of charge.

LAMPS—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns that defects in thousands of so-called "rainbow lamps" or "mini-shadowy stands"—designed to cast shadows of various shapes—could cause a fatal electric shock. Consumers should unplug the lamps immediately. Use extreme care when unplugging. Avoid touching any metal object while doing so. Greenland Studios of Miami & Spencer Gifts of Atlantic, NJ, distributed the lamps, which were advertised nationally in several publications as well as in mail-order catalogs. The firms imported the lamps from Taiwan. Price was about \$2. Both firms will refund full price of all returned lamps, including postage.

CHILD CAR SEATS—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warns parents that certain children's car seats made by Questor Corp. of Toledo, OH, are capable of causing serious cuts or finger amputations. The folding child car seats were made before April 1973 & were labeled with the "Kantwet" brand name. The locking mechanisms are the parts of the seat that can cause injury. NHTSA suggests the following steps to avoid injury:

1. Before placing the child in or near the seat, lock it in place; watch your own fingers;
2. Place child in seat & secure him according to manufacturer's instructions;
3. If the seat must be removed or repositioned, be sure to keep child's find fingers away from folding or locking parts.

Questor Corp. redesigned its child car seats made after March 1973 to remove the injury producing mechanisms. The company has asked stores that still have seats made before April 1973 to place warnings on them. To find out if the "Kantwet" car seat you already have or are about to buy is the unsafe kind, look for a date on the back of the seat. If there is no date, the seat was made before April 1971 &, therefore, has the unsafe design. If it has a date, any date before April 1973 indicates the unsafe design. [See Vehicle Safety Investigations on page 2 of this issue.]

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